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Van Zyl Smit (B.) (ed). *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*. Pp. xviii +601, figs, ill. Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016. Cased, £120, €150, US\$195. ISBN: 978-1-118-34775-1

V.Z.S.'s volume is the latest in a growing number of edited collections devoted to the afterlife of the ancient theatre. The difference here, however, is in scope; while the Brill companions have been author-specific, and the recent Bloomsbury collection devoted purely to contemporary theatre (see e.g. G. Rodosthenous [ed.], *Contemporary Adaptations of Greek Tragedy: Auteurship and Directorial Visions* [2017], R. Lauriola and K.N. Demetriou [edd.], *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Euripides* [2015] and P. Walsh [ed.], *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes* [2016]), v.Z.S.'s handbook encompasses reception within antiquity, the middle ages and modernity. It does not purport to be an exhaustive handbook, and there are a few notable omissions, such as the reception of Greek tragedy in contemporary dance; however, students and scholars will nevertheless find it a useful introduction to the field of classical performance reception.

The handbook is structured chronologically, with separate sections devoted to the reception of Greek drama in antiquity, the medieval world, the Renaissance and early modern period, and the contemporary world. An introduction exploring select theoretical frameworks employed within Reception Studies, alongside the specific chapters contained in the volume, contextualises the contributions. The handbook is supplemented with 24 illustrations, which give the reader a sense of how various receptions were staged. Useful guides to further reading follow each chapter. As is commonly the case with such collections, the structure is somewhat uneven, with Part 2, for example, featuring just one chapter, in comparison to the fifteen contributions that make up Part 4. Nevertheless, each section contains instances which not only introduce readers to the field, but advance its scholarly debates.

In Part 1, for example, G. Manuwald explores the legacy of ancient tragedy in Rome in the light of translation and adaptation debates. Manuwald argues that it is only because of the non-extant status of many Roman tragedies that the reception of Greek drama in later periods is considered unmediated by Rome. Instead, Manuwald suggests that Rome provided the first intra-generic instance of reception, and that conceiving of the period as such allows for a 'more nuanced and also methodologically advanced approach to the study of both Greek and Latin drama' (p. 80). C. Symes' contribution to Part 2 similarly encourages readers to

reassess the significance of a specific period for the reception of ancient drama. Symes counteracts the narrative that the dark ages were responsible for the loss of many ancient dramas, and paints the medieval world in a positive light through a consideration of the physical transmission, adaptation and dissemination of the plays during the period. Both chapters are representative of the volume at its best and, by demonstrating the value of often-overlooked moments of reception, will no doubt inspire further scholarly activity on the periods.

C. Kenward's study of Greek drama during Early Modern England is a highlight in Part 3. The chapter is the product of strong archival research and touches upon both university and professional productions. Most of the chapter, however, is concerned with accounting for the perplexing absence of productions of *Hecuba* during the period, in contrast to the regular references to the Trojan character in the plays of, for example, Shakespeare and Marlowe. Kenward argues that *Hecuba* haunted the literary imagination of the period, which guaranteed her presence in a wide variety of literary contexts. Today, Kenward notes, the situation is reversed, with twenty-first-century productions of *Hecuba* being 'persistently dogged by *Hamlet* ... it is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that epitomizes our cultural notion of tragedy, and also frequently provides first contact with *Hecuba*' (p. 191). Kenward is nuanced in her assessment of the material, and offers a genuine advancement upon reception scholarship for this period.

Part 4 is more uneven in its treatment. Each chapter explores the reception of Greek drama in a particular geographic location or, in the case of M. Ewans and K. MacKinnon respectively, in opera and film. Most chapters offer a chronological history, mapping key trends and noting watershed productions in their designated areas. The format will be useful for undergraduate students seeking introductions to reception history. Select chapters contain a number of tantalising references to early receptions warranting further archival investigation, such as P. Meineck's mention of the 1797 Boston *Medea Outwitted*. Additionally, it is pleasing to see countries represented that are usually neglected in reception studies scholarship, including T. Crombez's contribution on Greek Drama in Belgium and the Netherlands, E. Stehlíková's on the Czech Republic and M. Almohanna's on the Arab World. Crombez's comments upon the classical receptions of directors Ivo van Hove and Jan Fabre are of particular significance, not least due to the increasing prominence of these figures in the international theatre industry. The overall approach, however, prevents the creation of

any dialogue between the chapters and somewhat glosses over the nature of reception in today's globalised world. Those craving synergies between the chapters, an understanding of trends in classical performance reception or theoretical advancements for the study of Greek drama today will be left wanting. C. Lee and N. Morley's more thematic contribution on the reception of Thucydides to the same series represents a contrasting and perhaps more beneficial approach.

The book includes a few typographic errors, most of which are incidental. One, however, is of some gravity; Richard Schechner's 1968 production *Dionysus in 69* is cited as *Dionysus in '69*, *Dionysus in '69* and even once *Dionysus in' 69*. The additional apostrophe may appear insignificant, but its presence removes the explicit sexual innuendo contained in the production's title and replaces it with an (incorrect) date reference. Given the status of *Dionysus in 69* as a watershed moment in the history of classical reception, and the likely future role this handbook will play in undergraduate curriculums, the mistake will perpetuate an unfortunate misnomer.

The volume provides a useful resource for those wanting an introduction to a particular aspect regarding the reception of Greek drama. The strength of the volume will ultimately lie in the way that it will serve as a catalyst for new studies. A number of specialised databases for future research are referenced in the volume, some of which are being publicised for the first time. These include a Czech database of ancient theatre productions since 1889 ([www.olympus.cz](http://www.olympus.cz)) and Crombez's online bibliography and teatrography of Greek dramas in Belgium and the Netherlands (<http://dighum.uantwerpen.be/grieksdrama>). By introducing the broad history of the reception of ancient drama and pointing the reader towards these open-access resources, the volume is sure to become a launch pad for additional work in the ever-growing field of classical performance reception.

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